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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BALTIMORE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO COUNTERFEITING
UNITED STATES CURRENCY**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that Charles P. Defoe, age 41, of Baltimore, Maryland pleaded guilty today to counterfeiting United States currency.

In a statement of facts provided to the court as part of the plea agreement, Defoe admitted that from about October 2000 until April 30, 2002, he fraudulently manufactured counterfeit \$20, \$50 and \$100 Federal Reserve Notes. The \$50 and \$100 notes included hand-drawn simulations of the watermark and security thread features imbedded inside legitimate U.S. currency. These distinctive features caused the counterfeit notes to be referred to as the "artist notes" in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The counterfeit currency manufactured by Defoe which aggregated a face value of between \$70,000 and \$120,000 was passed throughout Maryland and surrounding states.

Following a lengthy investigation by agents of the United States Secret Service Baltimore field office, Defoe was arrested on April 30, 2002. The indictment was returned by a federal grand jury on May 9, 2002.

Defoe faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. United States District Judge J. Frederick Motz has scheduled sentencing for August 22, 2003 at 9:00 am.

The Secret Service encourages the public to carefully examine the money they receive. Many counterfeits have obvious flaws and are not of the same printing quality when compared to a genuine Federal Reserve Note. If you suspect that a bill in your possession is counterfeit, contact the nearest U.S. Secret Service field office at the telephone number found inside the cover of your local phone book.

This case is a result of an investigation by the United States Secret Service and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Craig M. Wolff.